

ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL
October 22, 2007 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
160 N. LaSalle, Bilandic Building, Room N-505, Chicago

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Awilda Adorno, Martha Arntson, Lori Baas, Robert Blade, Barbara Bowman (for Arne Duncan), Jeanna Capito, Mary Ellen Caron, Tim Carpenter (for Mark Donahue), George Davis, Jana Fleming (for Ellen Alberding), Phyllis Glink, Vinni Hall, Emily Harris (for Adele Simmons), Ava Harston, Kay Henderson, Eboni Howard (for Samuel Meisels), Colleen Jones, Terri Lawrence, Jason Leahy (by phone), Janet Maruna, Mark McHugh, Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Cynthia Moreno (for Bryan Samuels), Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Claudia Quigg, Anthony Raden, Elliot Regenstein, Linda Saterfield, Sarah Slaughter, Luz Maria Solis, Jerry Stermer, Mark Valentine, Jaci Vaughn (for Barry Maram), Kathy Villano, Maria Whelan, Kay Willmoth, Josie Yanguas

Absent: Carol Adams, Guy Alongi, Ann Alvarez, Martina Casey, Representative Elizabeth Coulson, Marilu Galan, Representative Deborah Graham, Senator Don Harmon, James Kaplan, Trinita Logue, Maureen Marx, Cordelia Meyer, Senator Carol Ronen, Leo Smith, Sheridan Turner, Judy Walker Kendrick

Plan for the Day

Harriet Meyer called the meeting to order at 11:05. Harriet asked members to introduce themselves and reviewed the day's agenda. Harriet also introduced a new member of the Council, Jeanna Capito, who is assuming duties as co-chair of the Infant Toddler committee, the position that was recently vacated by Bela Mote. Harriet asked that the Council approve minutes from the previous meeting. Vinni Hall moved to adopt the June 25, 2007 Early Learning Council meeting minutes. Ava Harston seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Updates and Dialogue

Elliot Regenstein introduced Kay Henderson, Division Administrator for Early Childhood at the Illinois State Board of Education and Barbara Bowman, Chicago Public Schools, and asked them to provide brief updates on the FY08 proposals and funding awards. Barbara handed out maps of Chicago neighborhood areas with the projected numbers of new children to be served by the Chicago Public Schools indicated by area. She stated that the delay in approving a final state budget is making the process of finalizing awards longer than anticipated. Barbara stated that the majority of new slots are in Latino areas, and include some third-shift preschool programs. She also stated that her office is focusing on the most unserved areas when awarding infant toddler center-based slots through the Community Partnership program. When asked by

Eboni Howard about challenges to serving Latino communities with little space for expansion, Barbara reminded the Council about the third shift programs and stated that she would also like to work with Action for Children to bring children in homes to center- or school-based programs. Josie Yanguas asked if Brighton Park or McKinley Park were neighborhoods that CPS would next focus on serving. Barbara replied that in those areas, as in many areas what is needed are strategies to build public awareness that preschool attendance is important. Maria Whelan suggested looking at variations on the Preschool for All model, saying that for some families a shorter week may enable their participation.

Kay Henderson reported that the Illinois State Board of Education received 232 Preschool for All RFPs in FY08, and all were included in 1st priority funding group. Kay H. stated that her office used IECAM data in making funding decisions, and thanked Emily Harris and Chicago Metropolis 2020 for their help in supplying data. Kay H. stated that, had the Governor's original FY08 funding request of \$69 million been approved, it would have been possible to fund most, if not all, fundable proposals. She stated that program contracts are still being negotiated, but that 78 grant awards have been offered to preschool providers, including 20+ new entities. Kay H. agreed with Barbara that there was a delay in finalizing grant awards because of the delay in an agreement on a final state budget. She stated that because of needing to wait for the final budget before offering grants, some programs that applied could no longer accept funds because of changes in the space they had available.

Kay Henderson continued, stating that ISBE received 145 requests – representing more than \$23 million - for Prevention Initiative funding, and has been able to award funding to six programs. She stated that the set-aside for infants and toddlers doesn't come close to supplying enough funding for this demand. Elliot Regenstein stated that the ability to fund so few programs for infants and toddlers clearly suggests that the ration of funding in the Block Grant needs to be looked at. She stated that she is going to analyze the PI proposals to get a sense of which programs could quickly serve many children, and that she will also make decisions consistent with IECAM data showing high-need underserved communities. Kay also stated that she plans to fund some center-based programs for infants and toddlers in FY08.

Kay commented that the Academic Development Institute had a federal grant to supply Parents As Teachers (PAT) training in Illinois. With that grant ending, the Ounce of Prevention, through their Illinois Birth to Three Institute, will assume the role of state training entity for PAT. Kay remarked that many programs have chosen PAT as the research-based program model that they will implement, so initial and ongoing PAT training for Prevention Initiative programs is very important.

Next, Elliot stated that the issue of resources to support committee staffer work, as well as the work activities of the committees themselves has arisen often, and that, while hopeful about the possibility of public support becoming available - both through the Council provision of the Head Start bill and through our own state budget – the co-chairs recognize that those resources are not available for this fiscal year. Elliot reported that the co-chairs have been approached by a foundation that has interest in supporting the work of the Council. The Grand Victoria Foundation has indicated that they would be interested in a proposal from Harriet and me, as Council co-chairs, to request support for committee staff. The proposal would be submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee. He stated that the Executive Committee had a discussion about this when they met two weeks ago, and the Committee met with representatives from the foundation earlier today. Elliot reported that the Executive Committee expressed their support for pursuing the foundation funding, and also urged the Council to continue to look into ways to secure public funding for our work. He stated that the co-chairs will move forward with a

proposal for funding support for committee staff work, as well as the coordination of the full Council.

Review and discuss committee work plan goals, objectives and action steps

Harriet Meyer reported that all the committees met over the summer to develop their work plans, and reminded Council members that the committee's work plans and charges are based on the recommendations from the Governor's Summit, the outstanding tasks from the previous committee's work plans, responses from the survey that was filled out by Summit participants, and other issues of interest to committee members.

Harriet explained that each committee and cross-committee was asked to create a work plan that included a finalized committee charge, goals, objectives, action steps and timelines for completing the work they identify. Harriet stressed the importance of the Council having a good understanding of what the committees are taking on over the next several months, and what direction they are moving in, as well as any potential challenges they foresee.

Harriet then asked the co-chairs of the committees to review through their work plans. (Please see attached work plans for details of proposed committee activities)

After the presentations, Council members had suggestions and comments for the co-chairs. Luz Maria Solis suggested that Linguistic and Cultural Diversity committee include representation from advocates for undocumented persons, as their needs are different from other immigrants. She offered to suggest members for the committee.

Phyllis Glink suggested that the Council (perhaps the Infant and Toddler committee) look at infant and toddler licensing. Maria Whelan suggested that the committee should include representatives from the DCFS licensing group in those discussions.

Barbara Bowman stated that another area to look into regarding licensing is the prohibition against children being in public schools unless they are students there, thereby limiting the opportunities for community-based organizations to use public schools as settings where they could provide services.

She also asked what the process would be for work on expanding capacity and resources for infant toddler programs, especially in light of the increased demand that Kay reported earlier. Elliot stated that this work is within the Infant and Toddler committee's charge, and that the Executive Committee and full Council would support recommendations from the committee as appropriate. Nancy Shier commented that the advocates are also moving forward the work on expanding resources for infants and toddlers through the legislative advocacy they have planned for this session. Kay H. stated that, while the statute requires spending 11% of the ECBG on infant and toddler programs, the state is spending closer to 13 or 14%, indicating that they have already been trying to respond to the need for increased resources for infants and toddlers.

Much discussion centered on issues of public awareness and outreach. Council members suggested that the Public Awareness committee consider a marketing plan that extols the benefits of all high-quality early learning programs instead of or in addition to a marketing plan exclusively focused on Preschool for All.

Jana Fleming asked whether the focus of committee work was solely on expanding access, or if

enhancing quality was still a central activity as well. Harriet Meyer reminded the group that during the Preschool for All design phase much work was done to outline the essential elements of high-quality programs, and that committees continue to work on the implementation of that. She also stated that not all quality elements were included in the initial plan and that committees should revisit any elements missing. Elliot Regenstein commented that some committees may need to think more about quality issues, but that if our quality vision has been implemented there will not necessarily be a need to revisit all of the Council's recommendations.

Kay H. stated that issues of quality are connected to issues of outcomes for children. Emily Harris stated that the idea of "benchmarks for success" has been folded into the evaluation work group of the Oversight and Coordination committee, and that perhaps the issue of how we measure the success of the program would be an appropriate topic for full Council discussion. Elliot Regenstein commented that in both versions of the federal Head Start legislation there is a focus on early childhood data collection systems, and that the Council would do well to think about how the "benchmarks" and evaluation discussions connect with data.

Kay Henderson also suggested that committees planning to present recommendations to the Council involving policies in ISBE should reach out to her before the final recommendation is complete so that members can discuss their plans with her to increase collaboration and ensure that the direction of the committee's recommendations can be legally considered by the state.

Jerry Stermer moved to accept the committees' work plans, and Linda Saterfield seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Wrap Up

Harriet Meyer thanked members for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.